

Affidavit in Michigan lawsuit makes wildly inaccurate claims about voter turnout in state

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The claim: In 10 Michigan precincts, voter turnout reached 100% and in 6 precincts it surpassed 100%

A lawsuit is asking a federal court in Michigan to force state leaders to disregard Michigan's certified election results and award its 16 Electoral College votes to President Donald Trump. It includes an affidavit that makes wildly inaccurate claims about voter turnout in Michigan cities and townships.

The affidavit comes from Russell James Ramsland Jr., a cybersecurity analyst and former Republican congressional candidate. Ramsland is the one who mistook voting jurisdictions in Minnesota for Michigan towns in a separate flawed analysis of voter turnout. His latest analysis correctly names Michigan voting jurisdictions, but similarly arrives at inaccurate voter turnout rates.



For instance, Ramsland claims that Detroit saw a turnout of 139.29%. The city's official results show that turnout in the city was actually 50.88% of registered voters.

When asked about the error in Ramsland's affidavit, Gregory Rohl, the attorney representing the plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit in Michigan, said he and his team would investigate the data. "I'm always willing to learn and surely want the facts set forth to be accurate in any filing bearing my name," Rohl wrote in an email to the Free Press.

Ramsland's analysis gained public attention when a witness shared its inaccurate findings during a state House Oversight Committee hearing in Lansing Wednesday. During the hearing, Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal attorney, brought a number of witnesses to share allegations of election fraud and misconduct already discredited by election officials and in court. The witnesses included Col. Phil Waldron, who said he's part of a team that looked into "election manipulation." He claimed that "publicly available information" from Michigan analyzed in an affidavit shows excessive voter turnout that indicates election fraud. But the numbers do not square with the statement of votes cast from Michigan counties.

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A chart included in Ramsland's affidavit lists 21 Michigan cities and townships, five of which are alleged to have recorded a turnout above 90% in November's election, while 10 purportedly saw turnout of exactly 100% and six surpassed 100%.

Recinct/Township	% Turnout
City of North Muskegon	781.91%
Zeeland Charter Township	460.51%
Grout Township	215.21%
City of Muskegon	205.07%
City of Detroit	139.29%
Spring Lake Township	120.00%
Greenwood Township	100.00%
Hart Township	100.00%
Leavitt Township	100.00%
Newfield Township	100.00%
Otto Township	100.00%
Pentwater Township	100.00%
Shelby Township	100.00%
Shelby Township	100.00%
Weare Township	100.00%
City of Hart	100.00%
Grand Island Township	96.77%
Tallmadge Charter Township	95.24%
Fenton	93.33%
Boncmia Twp	90.63%
Zeeland Charter Township	90.59%

It is difficult to imagine that a turnout rate above 100% — let alone 782% in the City of North Muskegon or 461% in Zeeland Charter Township — would have escaped election officials compiling the statement of votes cast. But beyond the implausible turnout rates Ramsland alleges, there are other glaring problems with the list. Shelby Township is named twice. So is Zeeland Charter Township, with two vastly different turnout rates: 90.59% and 460.51%. Ramsland lists “Fenton” without specifying Fenton City or Fenton Township. But the turnout Ramsland lists for Fenton does not match the turnout in either jurisdiction.

The actual turnout statistics reveal the inaccuracy of Ramsland’s numbers. His figure for North Muskegon is off by a factor of 10: The actual number is 78.11%, not 781.91%. For Zeeland Charter Township, he inflated the turnout nearly sixfold. For Grout Township and the City of Muskegon, his number is more than triple the correct number.

There is one location where the actual turnout matches the turnout Ramsland lists: Grand Island Township, a tiny municipality split between an island in Lake Superior and a stretch of the Upper Peninsula’s mainland. Turnout there

was 96.77%, according to the official record, as 30 out of the township's 31 registered voters cast a ballot in November's election.

The 215.21% turnout rate Ramsland listed for Grout Township initially matched the data in the county's statement of votes cast, but that's because there was an error in the report. Gladwin County Clerk Laura Brandon-Maveal explained that the election results certified by the county are accurate, but that the number of registered voters used to compute the turnout rate was incorrect. "We have to hand punch in the total number of registered voters and they put in the wrong number of registered voters," Brandon-Maveal said. The county released a corrected report Dec. 3.

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In a second affidavit Ramsland filed in the same lawsuit Dec. 3, he said that the information source for his first affidavit was data from the state's open data portal and Secretary of State's election results page "that no longer exists."

The Secretary of State's office never shared township, city or precinct turnout data on its results page, according to Tracy Wimmer, a spokesperson for the office.

This latest affidavit includes a new list of precincts in another attempt to demonstrate excessive turnout. It shows that "Spring Lake Township, Precinct 6 — B" had a turnout of 120%. Spring Lake Township's clerk said that there's no such precinct. Spring Lake Township Precinct 6 had a turnout of 66.74% in November's election. The list also shows that one precinct in the City of South Haven had a 100% turnout rate. The city's clerk said that there are only eight voters in that precinct, all of whom voted.

Ramsland's new list also showed 33 voting jurisdictions with turnout between 86.79% and 96.77%. An initial review indicated many of these turnout rates are accurate. Michigan had record turnout statewide. President-elect Joe Biden carried the state by more than 154,000 votes.

Our ruling

An affidavit filed in a lawsuit in Michigan seeking to overturn the election purports to show turnout rates in Michigan that indicate election fraud.

The numbers do not match the official statement of votes cast in all but one jurisdiction, and many inflate the numbers significantly. The official data show that the number of voters who cast a ballot in November's election did not exceed the number of registered voters in any of the jurisdictions named.

We rate this claim Pants on Fire!

Louis Jacobson contributed to this report.

Clara Hendrickson fact-checks Michigan issues and politics as a corps member with Report for America, an initiative of The GroundTruth Project. Contact Clara at chendrickson@freepress.com or 313-296-5743 for comments or to suggest a fact-check.

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